



MRT news

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newsletter of the MRT project

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ready for launch

THE Klang Valley MRT project is about to enter an exciting phase. Preparations are moving full swing for the first two tunnel boring machines of the project for launching. The elevated section will also see the launching of the first segmented box girder for the construction of the viaduct. (Stories on page 2)



PIECING TOGETHER • The cutter head of the tunnel boring machine (TBM) being lowered into the Cochrane Launch Shaft to be fitted to the front and middle shields which were lowered earlier. The TBM once re-assembled will begin excavating the tunnel.

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PIECING TOGETHER THE VIADUCT

by Leong Shen-Li

WITH so much excitement surrounding the impending launch of the first two tunnel boring machines (TBMs) for the Klang Valley MRT Project, there is a tendency for people to forget that a lot of progress has also been achieved for the elevated sections of the MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line.

The elevated section is also preparing for a launch in April at the site of the future Bandar Tun Hussein Onn Station site.

During the launching, the first segmented box girders (SBGs) will be lifted onto piers or pillars, and literally pulled together using cables to form a one-piece viaduct. A launching gantry will be used to lift the SBGs into place.

Each of the eight work package contractors of the elevated sections of the MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang

Line will be constructing viaducts that will link up to form a continuous elevated structure on which the MRT tracks will be laid.

The SBGs are manufactured off-site at two plants in Senawang, Negeri Sembilan, and Sepang, Selangor.

Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd Project Director Mr Marcus Karakashian says over 17,000 segmented box girders will be required for the project. The entire length of viaduct will be supported by over 1,000 piers.

“Once the first launching takes place, we will very quickly see the entire elevated structure for the Sungai Buloh-Kajang line take shape,” he says.



CAREFUL • The first launching gantry being installed at the future Bandar Tun Hussein Onn Station site.

TUNNEL BORING MACHINES GET READY TO START EXCAVATION

by Leong Shen-Li



TAKING SHAPE • The world's first Variable Density Tunnel Boring Machine being assembled inside the Cochrane Launch Shaft.

THE construction of the Klang Valley MRT Project's first line, the Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line, is about to enter its most exciting phase. After more than a year of construction, excavation of the line's twin tunnels along its 9.5km underground section is about to begin.

The first tunnel boring machine (TBM) arrived from Germany in Westport, Port Klang, at the end of January 2013. The TBM is being re-assembled inside the Cochrane Launch Shaft which required lowering many components of the machine, some weighing over 100 tons, to the bottom of the 30m deep shaft with special heavy lift cranes.

The Cochrane Launch Shaft had to be excavated to a depth of 30m as part of preparatory works for the TBM to be launched. Some 120,000 cubic metres of soil and rock equivalent to the volume of 50 olympic swimming pools had to be excavated to create the shaft.

As the length of the launch shaft is 180m while the full length of the TBM will be over 200m, the machine will have to be re-assembled in two phases. The second part of the machine can only be lowered after the first part has started boring and moved a certain distance underground.

This machine, the first Variable Density TBM in the world that was specially designed to handle the challenging Karstic Limestone conditions under the eastern part of Kuala Lumpur, will begin excavation work in May. The TBM will begin excavating from Cochrane towards Pasar Rakyat station, a distance of over 1km. This machine is expected to complete its task by mid-2014.

Meanwhile, another TBM arrived from China at the end of February and is being re-assembled at the Semantan Portal site at Jalan Duta.

This machine is an Earth Pressure Balance TBM which will be used to excavate the more consistent Kenny Hill geological formation found in the western part of Kuala Lumpur.

The Semantan Portal launch site, utilising a hillside at Jalan Duta, has been prepared. A retaining wall was built to allow the TBM to bore through, and then proceed excavating underground after the launch.

From the Semantan Portal, this TBM will make its way more or less under Jalan Damansara to the future KL Sentral MRT station in front of Muzium Negara, and then continue excavating under Jalan Sultan Hishamuddin past the old Kuala Lumpur Railway Station to the future Pasar Seni MRT station, a distance of 2.7km.

Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) Project Director Mr Marcus Karakashian says the progress achieved has been good.

“We are coming to a very exciting phase of the project. It will also be very challenging but I am sure we will be able to do well and construct the tunnel without any issues,” he says.

He says MRT Corp's underground team, the project's underground works contractor MMC Gamuda KVMRT (T) Sdn Bhd, and their sub-contractors, have worked hard over the past year to achieve this significant milestone.

The two TBMs will be joined by a “twin” in about a month's time which will excavate a parallel tunnel. All 10 TBMs will be paired and set to excavate specific stretches of the underground alignment.

Tunnel excavation works for the MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line is expected to be completed by the end of 2014.



BRAND NEW • Muck cars at the Semantan Portal which will bring excavation material from the tunnel boring machine out to the surface for removal.



SOLID BASE • Workers preparing the slab at the Semantan Portal where the tunnel boring machine will be assembled and launched.



IN POSITION • The middle shield of the tunnel boring machine being placed at the bottom of the Cochrane Launch Shaft.



EXCITING CHAPTER ABOUT TO BEGIN

IN our last edition of MRT News, we gave a sneak peek of the underground construction that is going to take place for the MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line. We mentioned that we are going to use 10 tunnel boring machines (TBM) to do the job of excavating the 9.5km underground section beneath the busiest part of Kuala Lumpur.

Three months down the road, I am very happy to announce that two of those 10 TBMs have arrived. As they were shipped here in pieces, the two machines are now being re-assembled at the Cochrane Launch Shaft and the Semantan Portal.

And by the end of April, we will enter what is easily one of the most exciting chapters of the Klang Valley MRT Project. The excavation of the 9.5km tunnel under the heart of Kuala Lumpur will begin.

Our first TBM will bore a tunnel from the Semantan Portal to Pasar Seni via KL Sentral, while another TBM will start from Cochrane towards Pasar Rakyat. Read more in our cover story of this edition of MRT News.

We will be using state-of-the-art technology for our tunnelling work, creating history.

There is a lot of interest in the TBM to be launched in Cochrane because it is the first Variable Density TBM to be ever manufactured. It was specially designed for excavating through Kuala Lumpur's Karstic limestone conditions which lies beneath the eastern part of Malaysia's capital city.

I witnessed this machine being re-assembled inside the Cochrane Launch Shaft and it is just amazing to see how every piece of this TBM, some weighing over 100 tons, is assembled inside the 30m-deep box in the ground.

Very quickly, all these pieces will be put together and our first Variable Density TBM will be ready for action.

Apart from "launching" the TBMs, another "launch" will mark a key milestone for the project. The commencement of construction work for the viaducts of the elevated section of the

Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line will see us using a gantry launcher to launch the first of over 17,000 segmented box girders which will be pieced together to form the viaduct.

Progress is good with the other aspects of the project. There have been challenges with the pace of work at some sites but with dedication and renewed effort on the part of everyone, I'm confident that there is nothing that we cannot overcome.

We are now shortlisting the designs for our trains and awarding the last work packages. Our Bumiputera Agenda is moving along encouragingly well with 44 contracts awarded to Bumiputera contractors Class G1, G2 and G3 in the beginning of this year. More contracts will be awarded via balloting on a quarterly basis.

As I have said in the previous editions, as we move deeper into the construction phase, traffic in many parts of the Klang Valley may be affected. Rest assured that we will continue to take all necessary measures to minimise the inconvenience to road users and make sure that construction work can be completed quickly. We will also ensure that everyone is well informed of changes to traffic conditions.

We will also continue to engage with residents and business owners along the Sungai Buloh-Kajang MRT Line. We thank you for putting up with the construction that is going on in many parts of Kuala Lumpur and beyond. Our work aims to reduce the congestion in the city which I'm sure is something we will all look forward to.

Thank you.

Azhar



ALL SMILES • Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak sharing a light moment with (from right) Gamuda Bhd Group Managing Director Dato' Lin Yun Ling, MRT Corp Chief Executive Officer Dato' Azhar Abdul Hamid, and former Chairman of MRT Corp Tan Sri Sidek Hassan, during his surprise visit to the Cochrane Launch Shaft.

PM VISITS COCHRANE LAUNCH SHAFT

by Nik Haizan Nik Zambri

PRIME Minister Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak paid a surprise visit to the Cochrane MRT underground station construction site on 4 January 2013.

The Prime Minister arrived at the site at 4.15pm and stayed on site for about one hour. He was briefed by Chief Executive Officer Dato' Azhar Abdul Hamid and Director of Underground-Tunnel Mr Blaise Mark Pearce on the significance of the site, the various activities being carried out and the overall status of the Sungai Buloh-Kajang line.

Also present were former MRT Corp Chairman Tan Sri Mohd Sidek Hassan, Gamuda Bhd Group Managing Director Dato' Lin Yun Ling, MMC Corporation Bhd Group Managing Director Datuk Hj Hasni Harun, and the senior management teams of MRT Corp, Gamuda Bhd and MMC Corporation Bhd.

Dato' Sri Mohd Najib said during the visit that the public had become receptive towards the MRT Project because they saw that the project would not only help Kuala Lumpur residents in terms of public transport but also raise significantly the value of land, especially in areas where the MRT stations were located.

"With the implementation of the MRT Project, new business opportunities will be provided while Kuala Lumpur's image will be on a par with major cities of the world," he told the media during the visit.

Dato' Sri Mohd Najib also said big and small companies could grab the opportunities which came with the MRT Project.

"Today alone, I have met so many Malaysian engineers who have the opportunity to participate in this massive project using the latest technology and gain experience."

The site will also be the shaft where four of the 10 tunnel boring machines used for the MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line will be launched. The TBMs will be assembled at the site once they arrive from Germany and China.

The first machine arrived at the end of January 2013 and will begin excavation work in May 2013.



INFORMATION • Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak being briefed by Mr Blaise Mark Pearce at the Cochrane Launch Shaft.



LEADING THE WAY • Dato' Azhar Abdul Hamid (right) with Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak (second from left) on their way to the Cochrane Launch Shaft.

project updates



ORGANISED
The Sungai Buloh Centralised Labour Quarters to house workers being constructed.



ALIGNED
Reinforcement steel bars for the Sungai Buloh Depot buildings being installed.



ONWARD TO THE CITY
Pilling works being carried out along a strip of land within Rubber Research Institute land.



PROGRESS
Construction at the LDP/Jalan Damansara intersection at Taman Tun Dr Ismail where pile cap construction is taking place.



BUSY LOCATION
Aerial view of the Pudu Launch Shaft at the Jalan Bukit Bintang-Jalan Pudu junction, with diaphragm wall construction in progress.



PANAROMIC
Aerial view of MRT construction work taking place along the Sprint Highway near the Kelab Golf Perkhidmatan Awam.



COMPLICATED WORK
Caissons being dug by hand for the construction of the retaining wall behind the row of houses on Jalan Kasah. The retaining wall will enable a new lane to be created to compensate for the space taken for the MRT viaduct in the middle of the Sprint Highway.



NARROW SITE
View of the Bukit Bintang MRT Station construction site along Jalan Bukit Bintang opposite BB Plaza.



FULL SWING
Construction work for the MRT alignment and future station in front of the row of shops at Taman Midah.



ALMOST DONE
Pier 63 and Pier 64, which is virtually completed, near Tesco in Taman Midah.



MODERN
Living quarters inside the Cheras Centralised Labour Quarters which houses workers for Work Packages V5 (Maluri Portal to Plaza Phoenix) and V6 (Plaza Phoenix to Bandar Tun Hussein Onn).



READY
Piers along the Cheras-Kajang (Grand Saga) Highway at Kampung Sungai Raya ready to support the MRT viaduct.



TIGHT WORKSPACE
Aerial view of the construction site at Sprint Highway's Maarof Interchange. This location will be the future Pusat Bandar Damansara station.



LAUNCH PAD
Aerial view of the Semantan Portal with parts of the Earth Pressure Balance Tunnel Boring Machine (covered in green tarpaulin) delivered on site.



HEAVY WORK
Overall view of the KL Sentral MRT Station box in front of Muzium Negara.



WORK PROGRESSING
Overall view of construction activities at Pasar Seni MRT Station. Among the work being carried out are the construction of the station box diaphragm wall and underpinning of the existing Pasar Seni LRT station.



DEEP HOLE
Excavation of the Lower Shaft near Jalan Inai where a tunnel boring machine will be launched.



TAKING SHAPE
Aerial view of the Pasar Rakyat Station construction site. The station will be in the heart of the future Tun Razak Exchange (TRX).



DEEP SHAFT
Aerial view of the Cochrane Station Box and Launch Shaft.



DETOUR
Road diversions in front of Aeon Taman Maluri for the construction of the Maluri MRT Station.



READY TO GO
Site being cleared for the construction of the MRT line along the Cheras-Kajang (Grand Saga) Highway and station at Bukit Dukong.



COMING UP
Piers being constructed along the Cheras-Kajang (Grand Saga) Highway near Sungai Balak.



TAKING SHAPE
Aerial view from north towards Kajang town of MRT works at the Kajang RTM transmission station and Kajang Stadium.

9,000 REASONS WHY THEY NEED THE MRT

by Nik Haizan Nik Zambri



WINNER • MRT Corp CEO Dato' Azhar Abdul Hamid (left) with winners (from left) Ms Angeline Tu Sun Ing, Ms Yvonne Tan Eng Yen, Cik Atiqah Abdul Aziz and Encik Azmil Mohamed. With them is MMC Gamuda KVMRT (PDP) Sdn Bhd Director Dato' Azmi Mat Nor.

THE three-month “I need MRT because ...” contest organised by Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) concluded with a glitzy prize-giving ceremony on 29 January 2013.

Around 50 people comprising the management of MRT Corp, Gamuda Bhd, MMC Corporation Bhd and members of the media were present at the event which was held at TEEQ Restaurant on the rooftop of Lot 10 Shopping Complex in Kuala Lumpur.

The night belonged to the four winners of the “I need MRT because ...” contest, especially the grand prize winner Ms Angeline Tu Sun Ing who took home RM10,000. Ms Angeline’s winning

entry was: “I need MRT because it takes more than 198,000 cars off the road daily” coupled with a picture of a traffic jam beneath a fly-over.

Speaking about her participation in the contest, Ms Angeline said: “I moved from Johor to Kuala Lumpur four years ago and I heavily rely on the public transport here.”

“Although the public infrastructure here is well developed, I still think more can be done to enhance it and no doubt MRT is the answer. My family and I can’t wait to have the MRT up and running,” she added.

The other three lucky winners of the contest were Cik Atiqah Abdul Aziz, Encik Azmil Mohamed and Ms Yvonne Tang Eng Yen. They were the monthly winners for October, November and December respectively. They each received RM5,000.

Cik Atiqah’s entry was: “I need MRT because it is necessary to keep me punctual in a city moving fast into the future” while Azmil’s read: “It’s like my second car, but I don’t pay for petrol or toll, and I don’t cause jams or pollution!” Ms Yvonne’s line was: “I need MRT because I can travel a thousand miles conveniently while living a green lifestyle.”



PROUD • Grand Prize Winner Ms Angeline Tu Sun Ing posing next to a poster portraying her winning entry.

The prizes were presented by MRT Corp Chief Executive Officer Dato’ Azhar Abdul Hamid and MMC Gamuda KVMRT (PDP) Sdn Bhd Director Dato’ Azmi Mat Nor.

In September 2012, MRT Corp organised the “I need MRT because ...” contest to create awareness about the MRT project. The three-month online contest required the participants to submit pictures and slogans as to why they needed the MRT in their everyday lives.

MRT Corp received close to 9,000 entries and registered more than 10,000 votes!

44 BUMIPUTERA CONTRACTORS SELECTED

by Nik Haizan Nik Zambri

MASS Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) conducted a balloting exercise to select Bumiputera contractors for 44 work packages for the Klang Valley MRT Project Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line on 30 January 2013. The contracts were for Bumiputera contractors belonging to Class G1 (formerly Class F) Class G2 (Class D) and Class G3 (Class E).

The contractors were selected from a list of 550 contractors which had been shortlisted from around 1,300 companies which applied last year.

All companies which are successful in being awarded projects will undergo a training programme before commencing work. The training is part of MRT Corp’s efforts to ensure successful companies are able to maximise their efficiency, and therefore their margins.

The first training session was held at MRT Corp’s Headquarters on 6 March 2013 and 7 March 2013. The two-day course was delivered by MRT Corp as well as MMC Gamuda as the Project Delivery Partner. The Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), Institut Kerja Raya Malaysia (Ikram) and Pusat Khidmat Kontraktor (PKK), a unit of the Ministry of Works also delivered their tailor-made modules to the participants.

The contracts are part of the Government’s target of achieving 43% participation of Bumiputera contractors in the MRT project.

MRT Corp has allocated 250 work packages worth RM200 million for Bumiputera contractors of Classes G1, G2 and G3 and balloting to select contractors will be held every quarter.



FOR THE CAMERA • Successful Bumiputera contractors at the balloting event posing for a group photo after the completion of the balloting process.



CONCENTRATING • Bumiputera contractors attending the training session at MRT Corp headquarters.



TRANSPARENT • Persatuan Kontraktor Melayu President Dato’ Mokhtar Samad, picking the name of a Bumiputera contractor to be selected for a contract.

LAUNCH OF ETBS AT BURSA MALAYSIA

by Nik Haizan Nik Zambri

DANAINFRA National Berhad’s Exchange Traded Bonds and Sukuk (ETBS) made its debut at Bursa Malaysia on 8 February 2013. Danainfra’s sukuk is the first of its kind where it is tradable before the 10-year maturity period.

With a face value of RM100 per unit, a minimum of 10 units is needed as capital to start the investment in the ETBS. The profit of this Government guaranteed sukuk is at 4% and also tax exempt.

Danainfra is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Ministry of Finance. It was set up for the specific purpose of raising funding for infrastructure projects. Danainfra’s sukuk was launched to partly fund the MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line.

The ETBS was launched by Prime Minister Dato’ Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak on 8 January 2013.

At the launch, he said the ETBS issuance would enable citizens to have a stake in the country’s success.

“By opening up our economy, we are offering the rakyat a stake in our nation’s success and from today, those opportunities are open to more people than ever before with Islamic bonds to be traded more widely.

“I am particularly pleased to be able to say that the funds raised will support the MRT project, a landmark commitment that will play a prominent part in Malaysia’s future success.”

Danainfra has allocated RM300 million under this issuance. The bond opened at RM100.98 and reached a high of RM101.40 before closing at RM101.31 on the first day. A total of 1.4 million units changed hands on that day.

NEW MIT ON THE ROAD

by Natalya Evon Matthew



NEW LOOK • Visitors entering the MIT which has been redesigned.

MASS Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) has commissioned a brand new MRT Information Truck (MIT) which began its rounds in the Klang Valley in February 2013.

The custom-made truck comes with fresh new design that is in line with the new MRT branding with the Kuala Lumpur skyline.

The MIT is equipped with two new interactive kiosks and one screen with the interactive “Hawk-eye” which allows visitors to get a 360 degree bird’s eye view of the entire MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line, including station location details.

The exterior of the new truck features the winning advertisement of the recent “I need MRT because...”

campaign while the interior features the Kuala Lumpur skyline formed by palm prints. The different shades and sizes of the palm prints represent the multi-ethnic composition of the city’s population.

As you step into the MIT, a floor-to-ceiling visual gives visitors the feeling that he or she is in a station.

The new design gives MRT Corp a user-friendly approach to promote understanding about the project.

The MIT is on the road everyday except Mondays and visits at least two locations in a day. Members of the public can find out the location of the MIT daily from the MRT Project website at www.mymrt.com.my or Twitter @MRTMalaysia.

SEMANTAN PORTAL OPEN DAY

by Nik Haizan Nik Zambri



INTERESTING • Residents looking at information boards explaining the construction activities taking place at the Semantan Portal site.

MASS Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd (MRT Corp) and its contractor for underground works MMC Gamuda KVMRT (T) Sdn Bhd held an Open Day at the Semantan Portal where residents living near the site were invited to view the progress of the construction there.

The event was held on 2 March 2013. It was the first where residents were invited onto an MRT construction site to allow them to see first hand the construction activities being carried out.

The visitors got to see the slab where the two tunnel boring machines (TBM) will be launched and the wall where the TBMs will bore through when they start excavating. There were also some display boards and a TV screen showing how the

MRT tunnel will be constructed.

Semantan Portal is at the northern end of the 9.5km MRT tunnel where the elevated section of the alignment goes underground. The southern end of the tunnel is at Maluri Portal.

Besides giving the opportunity to show and update residents on the progress of the project, the Open Day also allowed MRT Corp and MMC Gamuda to get to know the residents living around Semantan Portal better.

More such sessions will be held to promote understanding about the MRT project to residents and business owners living or operating along the alignment.

HAPPENINGS



COOPERATION • CIDB Malaysia’s Chief Executive Dato’ Sri Ir. Dr. Judin Abdul Karim (second from left) and Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd CEO Dato’ Azhar Abdul Hamid (second from right) exchange documents after signing a memorandum of understanding to carry out initiatives that will position the Klang Valley MRT Project as an industry benchmark in the quality of construction and adherence to safety and health procedures.



FACING THE PUBLIC • MMC Gamuda KVMRT (PDP) Sdn Bhd Deputy General Manager Mr Stanley Keung addressing the residents of Casa Indah 1 and 2 of Kota Damansara on 4 January 2013. During this session, the residents raised concerns about the underpass which will be built at the Persiaran Surian-Persiaran Mahogani junction. The MRT Project team explained that necessary steps will be taken to minimise the inconvenience to the residents.



CASUAL • Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd Director of Stakeholder Relations and Land Management Encik Haris Fadzilah Hassan (right) explaining to the residents of Kampung Selamat, Sungai Buloh, details of the alignment near the village. The engagement session was held at Surau Kampung Selamat on 17 January 2013 and was attended by about 50 people.



PERSONAL ATTENTION • Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd’s Ir. Chan Keng Lum (standing) showing details of the MRT Project to members of the management of Menara Bangsar Condominium. This engagement was held on 7 February 2013 at the MRT Corp’s headquarters.



GETTING DETAILS • Residents of Villamas Sierramas Sungai Buloh listening to Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd Stakeholder Relations and Land Management Senior Manager Cik Zainab Abdul Aziz (standing, second from left) and MMC Gamuda KVMRT (PDP) Sdn Bhd’s Encik Muhammad Amran Othman (standing, left) explain details about the MRT Project on 21 February 2013. Villamas Sierramas is located near the future Sungai Buloh MRT station.



RAISING A POINT • A resident of Taman Billion, Cheras, asking questions about the MRT Project during a public engagement session on 27 February 2013. More than 50 residents were present at this engagement session.



FOREIGN INTEREST • A group of 200 students from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, paid a visit to Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd headquarters on 18 March 2013 to learn more about the MRT Project. The students are in their third year masters programme, majoring in design in civil engineering. They were later brought on a tour of the alignment.



ATTENTIVE • Encik Mohd Fuad Mohd Daud, a representative from TSR Bina Sdn Bhd, the main contractor for the Kajang Depot, explaining about construction work at a public engagement session at Balai Raya Kampung Sungai Jernih, Kajang on 11 January 2013. The village is close to the Kajang Depot construction site. Around 70 residents attended the session.

GIVING MRT WORKERS A HOME

by Leong Shen-Li



NICE LOCATION • An aerial view of the Cheras CLQ.



PREPARING A MEAL • A worker cooking his meal in the communal kitchen.



FUN TIME • Workers playing futsal during their free time.



NEAT • MMC Gamuda KVMRT (PDP) CLQ Officer Encik Sudirman Mahili observing Mr MD Alamin (in grey shirt) and another worker tidying a room that is ready to receive new workers.

WALKING along the corridors between the neat rows of cabins in the Cheras Centralised Labour Quarters (CLQ), one cannot help but appreciate the contrast between this facility and the many *kongsis* one sees at construction sites.

Situated in a small valley between Cheras Sentral Shopping Complex (formerly Plaza Phoenix) and the Royal Malaysia Police College, the Cheras CLQ is where some of the thousands of workers of the Klang Valley MRT Project will call home while they help build Malaysia's first MRT line.

The clean and tidy environment is not lost of the workers.

"This is the nicest place I have stayed in since I came to Malaysia six years ago," says Mr MD Alamin Hosain. The 25-year-old Bangladeshi, who is employed by one of the MRT Project work package contractors, is obviously happy with where he is living in now.

"I share a room with five others. We have been provided with mattresses, pillows, sheets and two fans per cabin. The place is also very clean," he says. His CLQ mates include Bangladeshis, Myanmar, Nepalese, Indians and workers of many other nationalities.

The Cheras CLQ is one of four built to house workers for the project, who could number as many as 12,000 at the height of construction. The other CLQs are located at Sungai Buloh, Cochrane and Kajang.

Each CLQ is like a mini-township complete with facilities that cater to the workers' needs. The CLQs have comfortable living quarters, with each cabin equipped with three double bunk beds, a wardrobe for each worker and fans. A cafeteria provides two meals a day to all workers. There is also a centralised kitchen for those who want to do their own cooking. There are also recreational facilities, a clinic and shops.

Movement in and out of the CLQ is closely monitored. Every worker entering the CLQ will have to go through a face recognition system and scan his or her pass. Visitors are given temporary access cards when entering. Workers are transported by bus to their worksites every day.

Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd hopes to set a new standard in housing workers in the construction industry with the CLQs. While the comfortable CLQ may just be one of many reasons, Mr MD Alamin has no qualms saying: "I hope to work for the MRT project as long as I can."



WELL STOCKED • One of the kiosks in the CLQ.



WELL LAID OUT • The living quarters, kitchen and other buildings of the CLQ are laid out in a spacious manner.

WHERE TRAINS RETURN TO AT NIGHT

by Leong Shen-Li

ONE of the greatest challenges when building a rail system in an urban area is locating a big enough space for a depot for trains to be kept when they are not operating. The depot will also be the place where trains are repaired, maintained and cleaned.

For the Klang Valley MRT Project's first line, the Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line, a large swath of land which previously belonged to the Rubber Research Institute of Malaysia was acquired to become the line's main depot. At the other end of the line, a smaller piece of land in Kampung Sungai Jernih near Kajang will become the second smaller depot.

The Sungai Buloh Depot is vast, occupying 65 hectares of land, equivalent to around 100 football fields.

The depot has to have enough sidings to accommodate all 58 train sets operating on the MRT Sungai Buloh-Kajang Line, and provide maintenance buildings and workshops. The depot will also house the Operations Control Centre from where the railway will be controlled.

The Kajang Depot, which is much smaller occupying 12 hectares, will also have sidings for trains which will begin running from the Kajang end of the line. The depot will provide light maintenance facilities and a backup Operations Control Centre to that at the Sungai Buloh Depot.

Construction of both depots are proceeding well. Piling work for buildings in the Sungai Buloh Depot is on-going while at Kajang, site preparation work is complete and construction of buildings can now follow.

Mass Rapid Transit Corporation Sdn Bhd Project Director Mr Marcus Karakashian said getting the depots ready is crucial.

"The depots have to be ready for us to store the trains when they arrive in 2014. Our contractors are working hard to make sure they meet that deadline," he says.



VAST • Aerial view of the Sungai Buloh Depot site (within yellow boundary), with the Sungai Buloh Centralised Labour Quarters next to the site (within red boundary). The inset shows piling works being carried out at the site.

MRT INFO CENTRES

KOTA DAMANSARA

No. A-9-G, Jalan Teknologi 3/9
Bistari De Kota, Seksyen 3
Kota Damansara
47810 Petaling Jaya, Selangor

TAMAN TUN DR ISMAIL

TTDI Plaza, Jalan Wan Kadir 3
Taman Tun Dr Ismail
60000 Kuala Lumpur

KAJANG

No. 11-G, Jalan Metro Avenue 1
43000 Kajang, Selangor

Mon – Fri: 10.00am – 6.00pm
Saturday: 10.00am – 2.00pm



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